

**REMARKS**

Claims 9, 11 and 13-17 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Podbielniak '796 (U.S. Patent No. 2,281,796 in view of Vaughan '015 (U.S. Patent No. 2,819,015 and Kanel et al. '720 (U.S. Patent No. 6,106,720 as well as DeFilippi et al. '415 (U.S. Patent No. 4,349,415, while claim 14 is rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Podbielniak '796 in view of Vaughn '015, DeFilippi et al. '415 and Kanel et al. '720 and further in view of Holl '529 (U.S. Patent No. 6,752,529). The Applicant acknowledges and respectfully traverses all of the raised obviousness rejection in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 18 and 19 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim(s). In accordance with this indication, the subject matter of claim 18 is incorporated into claim 9 and amended independent claim 9 is now believed to be allowable.

In addition, the subject matter of claim 19 is incorporated into independent claim 11 and amended independent claim 11 is now believed to be allowable. As claims 13-16 each depend directly from amended independent claim 11, those dependent claims are also believed to be allowable.

If any further amendment to this application is believed necessary to advance prosecution and place this case in allowable form, the Examiner is courteously solicited to contact the undersigned representative of the Applicant to discuss the same.

In view of the above claim amendments and claim cancellations, the Applicant respectfully submits that further comments concerning the applied prior art of Podbielniak '796, Vaughan '015, DeFilippi et al. '415, Kanel et al. '720 and/or Holl '529 is not believed necessary. The Applicant also notes the remaining prior art cited in the official action. As none of that additional art is applied by the Examiner against the claims of this application, the Applicant is not providing any comments concerning that art as well.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the raised rejection(s) should be withdrawn at this time. If the Examiner disagrees with the

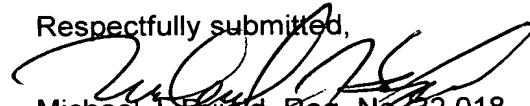
Applicant's view concerning the withdrawal of the outstanding rejection(s) or applicability of the Podbielniak '796, Vaughan '015, DeFilippi et al. '415, Kanel et al. '720 and/or Holl '529 references, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate the specific passage or passages, or the drawing or drawings, which contain the necessary teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure required by case law. As such teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure is not present in the applied references, the raised rejection should be withdrawn at this time. Alternatively, if the Examiner is relying on his/her expertise in this field, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to enter an affidavit substantiating the Examiner's position so that suitable contradictory evidence can be entered in this case by the Applicant.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the raised rejection(s) should be withdrawn and this application is now placed in a condition for allowance. Action to that end, in the form of an early Notice of Allowance, is courteously solicited by the Applicant at this time.

The Applicant respectfully requests that any outstanding objection(s) or requirement(s), as to the form of this application, be held in abeyance until allowable subject matter is indicated for this case.

In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,



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